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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 002246

SIPDIS

ALSO FOR SCA/PB TARA FOLEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/19/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [KNNP](#) [PK](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: MUSHARRAF RESIGNS: INDIAN REACTION PURPOSEFULLY
MUTED, BUT FEAR GROWS OF WEAKENED CIVILIAN CONTROL

REF: STATE 88734

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Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i., Steven White for Reasons 1.4 (B
, D)

11. (C) Summary. Official Indian reaction to news of President Musharraf's resignation has been a calculated message of non-interference and a desire to work with the GOP to continue to improve bilateral ties. Below the surface is a fear that Musharraf's departure could lead to a breakdown of civilian control over the Pakistani military/intelligence apparatus, reinserting an uncomfortable element of uncertainty in the future of Indo-Pak relations. End Summary.

----- Points Delivered -----

12. (C) Reftel points were delivered August 19 to Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Joint Secretary (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran) T.C.A. Raghavan and Joint Secretary (Americas) Gaitri Kumar. Our MEA interlocutors thanked us for sharing the USG approach to Musharraf's resignation but offered no immediate substantive response. Official Indian reaction began with a particularly evasive response to questions from the media from the MEA spokesperson, who said simply: "We have no comments to make on the resignation of President Musharraf of Pakistan. This is an internal matter of Pakistan." External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee reiterated that India won't interfere in Pakistan's internal crisis, and asserted that India did not expect any major shift in policy toward Islamabad. "Relations are not individual specific," Mukherjee stated, adding that his recent visit to Pakistan had reinforced the ongoing nature of the Composite Dialogue talks. Opposition BJP party spokesman

Ravi Shankar Prasad also offered no comment on what he termed Pakistan's internal affair.

----- Fear Of Uncertainty And A Pakistani Army Out Of Civilian Control -----

13. (C) Behind the scenes, however, is an underlying fear that Musharraf's departure could have negative implications for the Pakistan government's stability, and for civilian control of its security apparatus. Former Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan G. Parthasarthy told Poloff that while Indian officials would not share the view publicly, in reality they are concerned that Musharraf's exit could lead to a split between the Pakistani government and military, with the civilians losing any control of the military and, consequently, over Pakistani intelligence agencies. Without a strong civilian leader, Pakistan will be left with "a civilian government only in name," Parthasarthy opined, with the top three security issues -- which he defined as India, Afghanistan and nuclear weapons -- left in the hands of the Pakistani military, specifically General Kayani. Parthasarthy, who served as High Commissioner during Nawaz Sharif's tenure as President and admits to having a bias against Sharif's "Islamist" leanings, argued that the Pakistan Army's emergence is especially troubling for India as, unlike the U.S. or China, New Delhi does not have solid links to the Pakistan Army. Should such a split occur, "We will be dealing with a hopelessly weak Prime Minister, a political non-entity, while ISI continues to do what it wants," he speculated.

14. (SBU) Parthasarthy's concerns were echoed in Indian media

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coverage of the resignation. In a sidebar in The Indian Express entitled "Delhi hopes for best, prepares for worst," the daily answered its own question of how this move will affect New Delhi-Islamabad engagement by saying "Too early to say but one thing (is) clear: too many uncertainties. Few know how the ruling coalition can impact (the) Army and ISI which control Pak attitudes on Kashmir, Afghanistan and terror." The Hindustan Times, under a headline "What it means for India," noted the decrease in infiltrations and border skirmishes under Musharraf, and quoted unnamed Indian intelligence officials as saying that with Musharraf gone, "terror groups are likely to target India with new determination." It argued that recent firings across the Line of Control into Kashmir prove that the Pakistani government is losing its grip on the Army, and speculated that the situation in Kashmir will allow Pakistan an opportunity to send more infiltrators. The right wing Pioneer, in an editorial, noted that Musharraf was the first Pakistani leader to give up UN Security Council resolutions on Kashmir and to approve the cease-fire along the Line of Control, two issues which have appeared to be reversing direction in recent days.

----- Comment: India Anxious, But Not New To Pakistan's Political Machinations -----

15. (C) Comment. Despite the calm public face, Musharraf's resignation has thrust India into another era of uncomfortable uncertainty with its neighbor. With nervousness already looming over infiltrations over the Line of Control, interference in events in Kashmir, and rising terrorism including the bombing of the Indian Embassy in Kabul, India's worst fear is of a rogue Pakistani Army/ISI refocusing on India. India sees the ball as being in Pakistan's court, waiting for the political situation to sort itself out, hoping against hope that the government will be able to maintain control over security/intelligence forces and will want to push forward with improvements made in the bilateral relationship under Musharraf's tenure. On the positive side, the innocuous remarks by Indian officials demonstrate maturity from Delhi and are a sign that it does not seek to take advantage of Pakistan's political problems

for short-term gain. There is also a feeling among many Indians, articulated by strategic affairs analyst K. Subrahmanyam on August 18, that the more things change in Pakistan, the more they stay the same; Subrahmanyam argued that the Army Chief has often dictated Pakistan foreign and defense policy, "therefore there will be no change for India." While India will likely take no position on the issue of a dignified exit for Musharraf, based on the initial reaction we have observed, Post expects the GOI to uphold the main objectives of reftel, i.e., to support the democratically-elected civilian government, and to encourage continued bilateral dialogue and further improvement in relations.

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